

What is claimed is:

1. A barrier for retarding fire comprising:
water-permeable fabric for covering a substantial area;
said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets.
2. A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is a polyacrylate or a polyacrylate derivative.
3. A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is polyacrylamide.
4. A barrier according to claim 1, wherein each one of said pockets is between about ½ inch and about 5 inches long and between about ½ inch and about 5 inches wide.
5. A barrier according to claim 1, where each of said pockets holds between about 0.005 grams and about 3 grams of said superabsorbent polymer.
6. A barrier according to claim 1, wherein said superabsorbent polymer is loose within said pockets when said superabsorbent polymer is unhydrated.
7. A barrier according to claim 1, further comprising two sheets joined together to form said pockets between said sheets, wherein at least one of said sheets is water-permeable.
8. A barrier according to claim 7, wherein said sheets are joined together with at least one joining element.
9. A barrier according to claim 7, wherein said sheets are joined together with stitching.
10. A barrier according to claim 1, further comprising means for fastening said barrier to a second fire-retardant barrier.

11. A barrier according to claim 1, further comprising fasteners for fastening said barrier to a second fire-retardant barrier.

12. A barrier according to claim 1, further comprising means for fastening said barrier to a building.

13. A barrier according to claim 1, further comprising fasteners for fastening said barrier to a building.

14. A barrier for retarding fire, comprising:

a plurality of pockets connected together to cover a substantial area;

wherein each one of said plurality of pockets has a pair of fabric layers, wherein at least one of said fabric layers is water-permeable, and a cavity disposed between said fabric layers, said cavity having a capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches;

wherein substantially all of said plurality of pockets hold between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of a superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity.

15. A method of retarding fire from burning an object, comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of fire-retardant barriers, each having water-permeable fabric, said fabric having at least 9 pockets per square foot, each pocket having a volumetric capacity of between about 0.03 cubic inches and about 17 cubic inches, wherein substantially all of said pockets contain between about 0.01 and about 2 grams of superabsorbent polymer per cubic inch of volumetric capacity of said pockets;

covering substantially all of said object with said plurality of fire-retardant barriers;
and

hydrating said superabsorbent polymer in each one of said plurality of fire-retardant barriers.

16. A method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of fastening said plurality of fire-retardant barriers together for covering substantially all of said building.

17. A method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of evaporating or boiling a portion of the water that was absorbed by the superabsorbent polymer to form a steam layer at a surface of the barriers for protecting said barriers from a fire.

18. A method according to claim 17, further comprising the step of quenching fire with said steam layer.